

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /077 W  
-----171157Z 076865 /12

P R 171133Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9819  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 04832

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR PDEV FR FT  
SUBJ: FTAI DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 32198 (NOTAL), (B) PARIS 4416 (NOTAL),  
(C) PARIS 2049, (D) 76 PARIS 37089 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: THE FRENCH ARE INVITING ALL OF THE FTAI'S  
POLITICAL FACTIONS AND LIBERATION GROUPS TO ATTEND A  
CONFERENCE IN PARIS BEGINNING FEB 28. THE CONFERENCE  
WILL HELP DETERMINE: WHETHER THE REFERENDUM WILL TAKE  
PLACE, AS PLANNED BY THE FRENCH, ON APRIL 24; WHETHER  
AND WHEN ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD; AND THE NATURE OF THE  
COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING MILITARY, TO BE  
ESTABLISHED BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE INDEPENDENT STATE.  
EVENTS IN DJIBOUTI AND THE REGION HAVE EVOLVED IN A WAY  
OFFERING SOMEWHAT BETTER PROSPECTS FOR AN INDEPENDENT  
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FTAI, THE QUAI BELIEVES. SOMALI POLICY HAS BECOME MORE  
CAUTIOUS BUT ETHIOPIA, WITH ITS CONFUSED INTERNAL SCENE,  
SEEMS TO BE PLAYING A WORST OPTION ROLE. WHILE THE  
CURRENT HORN ENVIRONMENT MAY BE SLIGHTLY MORE FAVORABLE  
FOR DJIBOUTI'S FUTURE, WE THINK THAT THE FRENCH  
ENVIRONMENT REMAINS WORRISOME. END SUMMARY'

1. IN DISCUSSION FEB 15, QUAI ACTING DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA CLAUDE HAREL TOLD US THAT THE GOF IS NOW SENDING INVITATIONS TO ALL FTAI POLITICAL FACTIONS AND LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE IN PARIS FEB 28. (HE INDICATED THAT ANY OAU CONFERENCE ON DJIBOUTI WAS NOT A FRENCH AFFAIR AND THAT WHILE THE FRENCH DO NOT OPPOSE SUCH A CONFERENCE PER SE, THEY ARE NOT "DEMANDEURS" AND WILL HOLD THEIR OWN CONFERENCE IN ANY CASE.) FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TERRITORY WILL BE GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE PARIS CONFERENCE, WHICH, HE SAID, WOULD HELP DETERMINE: WHETHER THE INDEPENDENCE REFERENDUM WILL TAKE PLACE APRIL 24, AS NOW PLANNED BY THE GOF; WHETHER ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AND, IF SO, WHEN; AND THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS TO BE CONCLUDED BY FRANCE AND THE FTAI AFTER INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING THE MILITARY RELATIONSHIP.

2. WHILE ACCENTING THE MANY UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED, HAREL DESCRIBED THE PROSPECTS FOR DJIBOUTI'S FUTURE AS BEING SOMEWHAT BRIGHTER THAN SIX MONTHS AGO. THIS WAS DUE MAINLY TO CHANGES IN THE REGION. INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN DJIBOUTI, ESPECIALLY THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT NOT HOSTILE TO MOGADISCIO, HAD HELPED CALM THE SOMALIS, LEADING THEM TO A "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE SOMALIS ARE NO LONGER CERTAIN OF SOVIET SUPPORT IN ANY CONFRONTATION WITH ETHIOPIA. MODERATE ARABS HAD CONFIRMED THE FRENCH IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAS BEEN A DEFINITE COOLING IN RELATIONS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND MOGADISCIO OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS PARTIALLY THE RESULT, HAREL CONTINUED, OF APPARENT SOVIET INDECISION ABOUT WHETHER TO TRY TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE OPENING TOWARDS THE EAST WHICH ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL SITUATION APPEARS TO OFFER. THE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT YET DECIDED HOW FAR TO GO IN WOOING ETHIOPIA'S NEW, SEEMINGLY MARXIST-ORIENTED LEADERS. SOVIET HESITATION DERIVES PARTIALLY FROM UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT FUTURE ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS AND FROM THE DESIRE NOT TO JEOPARDIZE THE STILL SOLID SOVIET POSITION WITHIN SOMALIA. ALL THIS, THE FRENCH BELIEVE, HAS REDUCED ANY SOMALI TENDENCY TOWARDS RECKLESSNESS ABOUT DJIBOUTI AND LED MOGADISCIO TO SUPPORT, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, FRENCH EFFORTS TO CREATE A VIABLE, INDEPENDENT STATE. (HAREL ADDED THAT SUCH A SHIFT IN THE SOMALI

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9820  
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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 04832

STANCE WAS EASY, GIVEN THE SOMALIS' CONVICTION THAT AN INDEPENDENT TERRITORY EVENTUALLY WILL FALL INTO THEIR HANDS AT ANY RATE.) BUT EVEN AFTER INDEPENDENCE, HAREL THOUGHT, SOMALIA WOULD NOT TRY TO ANNEX THE TERRITORY IF THE INHABITANTS DEMONSTRATE RESOLUTELY THEIR WILL TO REMAIN SEPARATE. THIS NEW SOMALI ATTITUDE RESULTED IN PART FROM THE VIEWS THAT SAUDI ARABIA, THE TWO YEMENS, EGYPT AND SUDAN HAD EXPRESSED IN MOGADISCIO, REDUCING SOMALIA'S MARGIN OF MANEUVER. MOREOVER, THE SOMALIS SEEM TO FEAR A SOVIET RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ADDIS ABABA TO THEIR OWN DETRIMENT, HAREL SPECULATED, A FEAR WHICH MENGISTU'S RECENT TAKE-OVER IS LIKELY TO EXACERBATE.

3. THE ETHIOPIANS ARE CURRENTLY MORE WORRISOME TO THE FRENCH. WHILE THE SOMALIS ARE EXPECTED TO ENCOURAGE  
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THEIR FTAI FRIENDS TO COME TO THE PARIS CONFERENCE, THE

ETHIOPIANS ONCE AGAIN SEEM TO BE FOLLOWING A WORST OPTION POLICY. INSTEAD OF URGING RECONCILIATION UPON THEIR FTAI FOLLOWERS, THE ETHIOPIANS ARE TRYING TO TORP-EDO FRENCH EFFORTS TO THAT END AND ARE BACKING ALI AREF IN HIS APPARENT ALL-OUT OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. HAREL IMPLIED THAT THE FRENCH FEEL HELPLESS IN TRYING TO INFLUENCE ETHIOPIAN ATTITUDES, PARTIALLY BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT OF THE 15 ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS WITH WHOM THE FRENCH HAVE DISCUSSED DJIBOUTI SERIOUSLY, ONLY THREE REMAIN IN HIGH OFFICE, AS ANOTHER QUAI OFFICIAL PUT IT.

4. HAREL SAID THAT THE FRENCH HOPE THE UPCOMING PARIS ROUNDTABLE WILL MAKE THE VARIOUS FTAI GROUPS AND FACTIONS "FACE UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES". AT THE MOMENT, ALL OF THEM SEEM TO OPPOSE PRE-INDEPENDENCE ELECTIONS, WHICH THE GOF NOW BELIEVES ARE NECESSARY TO SHOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS POPULARLY BASED. IDEALLY, THE ELECTIONS SHOULD BE HELD SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE REFERENDUM, THE GOF BELIEVES. HAREL SAID IN CONCLUSION THAT DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE HORN SEEMED TO BE GOING IN A DIRECTION HELPFUL TO DJIBOUTI'S FUTURE, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY HAVE GIVEN SOMALIA CAUSE FOR WORRY AND PRUDENCE.

5. COMMENT: NOTABLY (AND UNDERSTANDABLY) LACKING FROM HAREL'S EXPOSITION WAS ANY MENTION OF THE EFFECTS OF THE FRENCH, AS OPPOSED TO THE HORN ENVIRONMENT ON DJIBOUTI DEVELOPMENTS. THERE CONTINUE TO BE GREAT OPPOSITION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT TO EVEN A SYMBOLIC FRENCH MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE FTAI AND WITHIN THE PUBLIC AT LARGE TO ANY POLICY OPENING THE WAY FOR RISK TO FRENCH LIVES ONCE DJIBOUTI IS INDEPENDENT. AND THE FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS ARE JUST 13 MONTHS AWAY.

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## Message Attributes

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